

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 27, 2003

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 5:10 p.m.

In Attendance:

J. DiPrete, J. Gaines, C. Callahan, P. Guida, G. Grove, H. Gallo and F. Caprio

Public Remarks

No Public Remarks

Chairman Remarks

- Chairman DiPrete reported that he and Regent Gaines had attended the NASBE Legislative Conference in Washington during the week and had been able to meet with Representatives Langevin and Kennedy; and spoke by telephone with Senators Reed and Chaffee about funding issues surrounding NCLB. He said that the conference was very informative.
- Education Chief Paige had addressed the group on various education issues.
- Regent Gaines has been invited again this year to serve on the NASBE Board.
- Additionally, he had attended and served as moderator for the Academic Decathlon held over the weekend at the Community College of Rhode Island.
- On March 10th he and Regent Callahan visited the Perry Middle School. As discussed at the last Board meeting, there will be a series of visits to middle schools to support middle school reform priorities. Regent Callahan will be working with the High School Restructuring Committee on the middle school discussions.
- The community meeting with the city of Central Falls to consider candidates for the Board of Trustees will be held Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Regents approve the minutes of the February 27, 2003 meeting as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of School Construction

RIDE Staff member Celeste Bilotti reviewed each of the projects, as described in Enclosure 4 of the Board of Regents package of 3/27/03. Each project was described and voted on separately as follows:

BRISTOL-WARREN

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Bristol-Warren for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$37,900,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

CUMBERLAND

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Cumberland for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$17,987,507 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

EAST GREENWICH

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for East Greenwich (pending local approval) for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$600,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

EAST PROVIDENCE

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for East Providence for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$2,100,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Exeter - West Greenwich for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$1,528,700 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

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LINCOLN

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Lincoln for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$700,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

MIDDLETOWN

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Middletown for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$8,450,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

PROVIDENCE

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Providence for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$34,000,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

WESTERLY

MOVED AND SECONDED: That: The Board of Regents approve the necessity of school construction for Westerly for asset protection and improvement projects totaling \$55,000,000 pursuant to 16-60-4(9)(d)

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

(Regent P. Guida arrived at 5:30pm)

Approval of Teacher Tests and Para-Pro Cut Scores

The Chairman of the Regents' School Administrator and Teacher Quality and Support Committee, Jo Eva Gaines, introduced the agenda item and then asked Assistant Commissioner David Abbott to review, in detail, the

elimination of the PLT and the substitution of the Elementary Education Content Knowledge Exercise.

The group opened with a discussion of the Elementary Content Knowledge Test. Ms. Gaines expressed concerns raised about 2003 graduates that have already either taken or paid for the PLT and will now have to pay to take the new test. Regent Callahan asked that at the next committee

meeting the committee look at trying to do something to accommodate these grads so that the approval of the item can be considered tonight. Assistant Deputy Commissioner Abbott reminded the group that this requirement will not affect all 2003 graduates, only those elementary teachers that will or are currently teaching in Title I schools. Following an extended discussion that included a discussion of the recommended passing scores, members decided to approve the recommendation as amended.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Adopt the Elementary Education Content Knowledge Test as presented; and add, at the next meeting of the Board, an effective "date certain" to the motion, as a requirement for the issuance of the following teaching certificates in Rhode Island:

- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Elementary Education**
- **Early Childhood Special Education, and**
- **Elementary Special Education**

It Is Further Approved That: The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education eliminate the requirement of the Principles of Learning & Teaching Test K-6 for the issuance of the above noted areas of certification.

Finally, It is Approved: That The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education establish the following passing scores:

- **Elementary Education: Content Knowledge Test (0014) - 145**
- **Elementary Education Content Area Exercises Test (0012) - 148**

Test For Para-Professionals

David Abbot clarified for the group that the Para-Pros (teaching assistants) will be required to either have an Associates degree, or two years of college, or pass the Para-Pro assessment test are those individuals that work in a direct instructional role with students.

Mr. Abbott described the process used to design the Para-Professional test and how the test had been validated. Mr. Abbot also reminded the group that this requirement affects ALL teaching assistants. They will either have to have a two-year degree or pass the test.

There was an extended conversation about allowing alternative

assessments (especially) for those Para-professionals that have been working for many years.

MOVED AND SECONDED. THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adopt the Para-Pro test as an alternative to an Associate's Degree or two years of college in meeting the NCLB guidelines for services as a paraprofessional in the public schools of Rhode Island.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously, with the understanding that the Regents' Teacher Quality Committee will review alternatives based on performance.

It Is Further Recommended That: The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education establishes 461 as a passing score on the Para-Pro test.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Spanish Bilingual Proficiency Test

David Abbott again clarified the recommendation, i.e. that this test only affects bilingual Spanish teachers that are currently being used in Rhode Island in only one district - Providence. The test hasn't been given in four years so all of those teachers are currently holding emergency certificates. RIDE staff member, Charlotte Diffendale reviewed the process for the validation of the passing scores.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adopt the Spanish: Content Knowledge (0191) 140 Multiple Choice test and the Spanish: Productive Language (0192) six (6) Speaking, three (3) Writing Questions test as a requirement for the issuance of a bilingual endorsement in Spanish.

It Is Further Approved That: The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education establish the following passing scores:

- **Spanish: Content Knowledge (0191) 140 Multiple Choice Test - 156**
- **Spanish: Productive Language Skills (0192) six (6) Speaking, three (3)**
- **Writing Questions Test - 174**

VOTE: Approved Unanimously

Legislative Update:

RIDE Chief of Staff, Jennifer Wood reported that the House Finance Committee is using a new format for consideration and discussion of state budgets. House Finance Education Analyst, Sharon Reynolds will be presenting state department budgets.

Senate Finance Hearing is scheduled for April 21 at 3:00 p.m.

Bills to be heard are:

- **Qualifications for the Teacher Assistants**
 - **Certification of Athletic Coaches**
 - **Eligibility for Attendance - Grace One**
 - **Repeal of Metts Amendment - Teacher Testing**
 - **Rhode Island Telecommunications Education Access Fund**
 - **Removal of Charter School District Caps**
 - **Post Retirement Employment - Mentor Principals, Assistant Principals**
- A complete report is enclosed.**

Regents Appeals

The Chairman explained that the Regents appeals process, for various reasons, has been “plagued” with meeting cancellations so that we now have a backlog of cases. Mr. DiPrete asked that Regent Patrick Guida review the process and bring back a recommendation on how we might move some of these cases forward more expeditiously. Mr. Guida agreed.

Update of Supplemental Services

RIDE Director of Integrated Social Services, Virginia daMota reviewed the process used to approve the supplemental services “providers”. She told the group that a list of providers will be on line early next week. Currently members of the department are working with superintendents to help them with the process to be used to hire providers. There will be another RFP in late June.

(Regent Gaines left at 6:35 p.m.)

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner McWalters reported that he had also attended the Legislative Conference in Washington and while there, had the opportunity to meet with the FEDS on Rhode Island's AYP review.

- He told the group that the department has been awarded an enhanced assessment grant from the feds. He gave the group a brief overview of the grant. It will support the development of test specifications. It is now funding the development of grade (3-8) level expectations.
- Re: Hope High School - Site based team approval passed by more than 75% of the faculty. The question will now be forwarded to the "central" team for review and vote. Outstanding issues/disagreements involve budget and design and flexibility in teacher assignments.
- The performance audit report on the Department of Education will be released next week. The auditors accepted most of the comments from the department as part of the report.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.